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SUBJECT: USAID Acting Administrator Meeting with UN DSRSG to Sudan

1. (SBU) Summary: On October 24, USAID Acting Administrator Alonzo Fulgham and Acting Assistant Administrator for USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/DCHA) Susan Reichle met with Deputy Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary General (DSRSG) and Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator for Sudan Ameerah Haq as part of the delegation's October 24 to 27 visit to Sudan. In a "tour d'horizon" that encompassed the political scene and humanitarian challenges, Ms. Haq and her chief of political affairs described the worrying state of election and referendum preparations, as well as the difficulties of managing an increasingly complex humanitarian response. End summary.

LACK OF PREPARATION, CONSENSUS ON ELECTION

2. (SBU) DSRSG Haq's political advisor began the briefing by stressing that the lack of trust between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the National Congress Party (NCP) regarding the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) remains a significant risk to the peace process as elections and the referendum approach. At this late date in the process, the parties should be reaching consensus; however, the opposite appears to be the case. The National Election Commission is weak, perhaps even by design, impeding implementation of the various stages of election preparation. If federal-level preparation is weak, state level organization is even weaker. While the mechanics of the election may be moving forward, the NCP and SPLM have not agreed upon critical issues that will impact the conduct of elections, such as the border demarcation and the census.

3. (SBU) Regarding the referendum scheduled for January 2011 on potential Southern Sudan independence, Haq and her advisor expressed hope that the meeting between Riek Machar and Ali Osman Taha, the vice presidents of Government of Southern Sudan and Sudan's Government of National Unity, respectively, had resolved the voting formula. However, she noted that recent information indicates that the deal may not be 'sealed.' The parties agree that southerners in the north, as well as the diaspora, will be permitted to vote. However, outstanding issues remain regarding the number of votes required for the referendum to be considered valid. Currently, the parties are discussing a formula that will require that 66 percent of registered voters participate, of which a simple majority would be sufficient to determine separation. The parties view the election and referendum as a package deal, and both are needed to move the CPA process forward.

DARFUR SECURITY, RETURNS COMPLEX

4. (U) Turning to the humanitarian situation, Ms. Haq informed the

delegation that gap-filling by UN agencies and NGOs averted a humanitarian crisis following the early March NGO expulsions. In addition, the U.S. Special Envoy (SE) to Sudan General Scott Gration has opened humanitarian space through his initiatives.

15. (SBU) In Darfur at present, most assistance is flowing to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps, as areas outside camps are increasingly unsafe for humanitarians. In addition, due to the prevailing insecurity outside of camps, IDPs are not returning to pre-crisis homes. At the same time, Haq stated that the humanitarian community must avoid creating a situation of dependency through protracted relief to camps, particularly while camps become increasingly political entities where IDPs who might want to return home are held back by their leaders. The international community has clearly expressed to the GOS that returns must be voluntary and verifiable. DCHA Acting USAID/DCHA Assistant Administrator Reichle asked Haq about returns-related land issues. The UN DSRSG replied that Darfuri civil society must be involved in any land reform discussions and in resolving land disputes. Through the Doha process, the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan (USSES) and others have encouraged civil society representatives to conduct the proper surveys to analyze the land issue. The UN DSRSG said land will be critical in the upcoming negotiations between the government and rebel groups.

16. (SBU) Security remains a primary concern for humanitarian operations. Haq noted the October 22 kidnapping of an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) staff member near El Geneina, West Darfur, and underscored her intention to persuade the High Level Committee (HLC) to make the planned HLC trip to El Geneina, despite the incident, as a show of solidarity with ICRC and the humanitarian community more generally. The DSRSG opined that abduction of

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international staff was increasing in frequency due to the culture of impunity that prevails in Darfur and the feeling of marginalization by Arab groups who are receiving little humanitarian assistance. The U.S. delegation promised to raise this as a matter of urgency at the meeting with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs scheduled for later in the day.

17. (SBU) Haq noted that the multiple entry visa initiative of SE Gration was a success, but that implementation has encountered obstacles, since the visas are attached to other agreements and bureaucratic procedures in place between the NGOs and the government. On the "Sudanization" of humanitarian assistance, as announced by Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir in March, Haq observed that this was a Presidential directive and would be implemented. Humanitarian agencies do not disagree with the principle of partnership, but a line needed to be drawn if the GOS arbitrarily assigned inappropriate national NGOs to the international agencies, compromising the latter's neutrality.

WORRYING HUMANITARIAN TRENDS IN SUDAN

18. (SBU) The UN representatives noted that the situation in Southern Sudan has become equally worrying. Haq stated that the international community had hoped by this time to be shifting from humanitarian work to development, but instead "we are moving backward" with insecurity in Jonglei State and other areas, as well as a food security crisis necessitating airdrops in multiple Southern Sudan locations. The UN is addressing this through a 'stabilization' plan that involves capacity building in governors' offices throughout the South, but focusing first on Jonglei. The UN plans to mobilize 150 UN Volunteers (UNVs) with expertise in information technology, planning, surveying, engineering, and medicine. To date, the UN has recruited 55 UNVs. These efforts are in preparation for a 'soft landing' the day after the 2011 referendum.

19. (SBU) In a quick review of other geographical problem areas, Haq highlighted Abyei as a "tinderbox," with the decision on the border still contested by some parties, as well as early Misseriya migration, which more immediately could lead to an outbreak of violence in the area. In the East, despite the Eastern Sudan Peace

Agreement (ESPA), little assistance has been provided to reverse the chronic situation of poverty and malnutrition. (Note: While the ESPA provided for the establishment of an Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund (ESRDF), with an initial GOS deposit of USD100 million and annual allocations of at least USD125 million for four years, the ESRDF remains underfunded, with only USD53 million allocated as of July 2009. End note). Haq stated that indicators in the East and South are far worse than Darfur.

110. (U) The delegation cleared this cable prior to departure.

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